

Disposition of Remains Report - Thailand

The following information is submitted in accordance with the referenced requirements. Various area mortuaries were surveyed in order to compile this data. [The laws cited are from the national law of Thailand](#)

Part I.

Thailand

Part II. U.S. Embassy or Consulate Information

U.S. Embassy Bangkok

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+66-2-205-4000 (phone)

+66-2-205-4103 (fax)

[State Department Country Specific Information](#)

[State Department Travel Information](#)

[Smart Travel Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)

Part III. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors.

Country Profile: Visit the State Department's website "[Background Note: Thailand](#)"

Religions: There is no official state religion in the Thai constitution, which guarantees religious freedom for all Thai citizens, though the King is required by law to be Theravada Buddhist. The main religion practiced in Thailand is Buddhism. Other religions in Thailand include Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Christianity, which are generally practiced by those living in Bangkok, where a multi-cultural population includes citizens of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and European descent.

Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in the Host Country

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy Bangkok assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.

AsiaOne International by Teck Hong Funeral (THF)

No.7, THF Building, Chan Road Soi 46

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<http://www.funeralrepatriation.com/>

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Klongsi

Klongluang

Pathumthani 12120 THAILAND

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siamfuneral@gmail.com

<http://www.siamfuneral.com/>

Part V. Profile of services available in the host country regarding preparation and shipment of remains**1. Period Before Burial**

When a U.S. citizen dies in Thailand, the body is usually preserved until an autopsy can be performed and the Embassy receives instructions from the Next-of-Kin regarding disposition of remains. There are generally two options regarding the disposition of remains:

- Cremation in Thailand and shipment for interment in the United States or other location
- Embalming in Thailand and shipment to the United States or other location for interment.

We work with funeral homes in Bangkok to ensure the wishes of the Next-of-Kin are carried out as quickly and professionally as possible. **Please note that embalming and mortuary services in Thailand may fall short of the standard expected in the United States. A funeral director in the United States should be consulted to determine the advisability of conducting an open casket funeral.**

2. Timing

Thai law does not provide a time limit within which a body must be interred. Fees can vary between hospital morgues. There may be an initial morgue fee of up to 2,000 baht/63 USD. If a body remains in the morgue for longer than 30 days, it will usually incur an additional fee of up to 600 baht/18 USD per day. If a body is not claimed after six months, the morgue will release it for cremation and burial in a public grave.

It is best to be flexible regarding dates for funeral ceremonies in the United States until the U.S. Embassy or Consulate can confirm the exact date the remains will arrive in the United States. It takes time to perform

an autopsy, to embalm or cremate the body, to prepare remains for shipment, and to prepare all the necessary documents.

It usually takes at least seven to 10 days following the date of death for the remains to arrive in the United States, and longer if the remains are to be cremated and mailed to the U.S.

3. Financial Arrangements

The deceased's family or legal representative is responsible for paying all funeral home expenses and for shipping costs of the remains and any personal effects. We encourage families to work directly with the funeral home to express their wishes and make arrangements. Families without a personal representative present in Thailand or major credit cards generally set up what is called an [Overseas Citizens Services Trust](#) with the Department of State. We use the money in this account to pay expenses associated with the death on behalf of sender. We can coordinate all aspects of mortuary services under this arrangement. Costs listed below are estimates, based on deaths with no unusual circumstances and should be considered for guidance purposes only.

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- To have remains returned to the U.S. for burial, the cost for embalming and air shipment is approximately \$5,000.
- The cost for cremation and air shipment of ashes is approximately \$1,500.

By law, the Department of State cannot carry out instructions on the disposition of the remains until we have received the required funds. There will normally be an interval of at least seven days between receipt of funds and shipment of the remains.

4. Cremation

There are crematoria in all provinces in Thailand. Cremations are usually performed at temples, and local undertakers handle the arrangements for cremation. In most cases, hospitals require an authorization letter from the U.S. Embassy attesting to the legal Next-of-Kin prior to releasing the body for cremation. Thai cremation procedures result in somewhat larger-sized pieces of bone than the fine ash that results from a cremation procedure in the United States.

5. Caskets and Containers

There are no Thai laws, national or local, governing the exportation of human remains. A casket containing a body or human ashes is treated as ordinary air freight at a cost of approximately 250 USD to the U.S. Shipping companies, however, require that the body be placed in a metal-lined casket. Suitable caskets or transfer cases are readily available, and they meet the requirements of the U.S. Public Health Service and U.S. port authorities. Containers for human ashes are also readily available.

6. Exportation of Remains

Procedures and documents for the exportation of human remains are as follows. Except as noted, all are shipping company or U.S. government requirements:

Embalmed Body:

- a. Embalming of the remains
- b. Enclosure of the remains in a metal-lined casket

Human Ashes:

- a. Ashes can currently be shipped by air freight

Documentation:

- a. Consular Report of Death
- b. Death certificate from the local government authority (required by Thai customs)
- c. Mortician's embalming certificate
- d. Mortician's statement of placement of remains in the coffin
- e. Copy of the deceased's passport
- f. Regular customs declaration (required by Thai Customs) Human Ashes: (air freight)
- g. Cremation certificate
- h. Consular Report of Death
- i. Death certificate from local government authority (required by Thai Customs)
- j. Consular Mortuary Certificate
- k. Affidavit from local funeral director concerning contents of urn

Please note also that some families have experienced additional complications resulting in delays and additional costs depending on which airline and shipper the funeral home employs, and whether a connecting flight is required. Some airlines require that the casket pass through an X-ray machine before shipment, and require advance consent of shipment from the deceased's family.

7. Exhumation and Shipment

Exhumation of remains is rare in Thailand because remains are generally cremated. . Ashes are normally placed in an urn and kept by the family, placed at a temple, or scattered outdoors.

8. Autopsies

Autopsies are normally performed free of charge if the deceased has died outside of a hospital or if the cause of death cannot be determined. Autopsies are performed within twenty-four hours after the Thai forensic authorities receive the remains. If an autopsy is not required by Thai authorities, it can often be conducted at the request and expense of the next-of-kin, at a cost of approximately 1,500 baht/47 USD along with an English translation fee of 600 baht/19 USD. Please note that full autopsy results are not available until at

least 45 business days after the completion of the examination, and the autopsy results will likely fall short of the standard expected in the United States.

9. Local Customs Regarding Funerals, Disposition of Remains, Mourning, Memorial Services

Once the body is transported from the hospital to the temple, the deceased will be placed into a coffin and brought to the crematorium at the temple. Four Buddhist monks chant for approximately 30 minutes, and then the coffin is placed into the crematorium oven and cremated. The ashes are usually collected the next day and placed into an urn. Some families choose to have a Buddhist funeral ceremony before cremation, during which the deceased is placed on a bed at the temple hall for a water ritual and then placed into the coffin. The coffin will then be displayed at the funeral hall where Buddhist monks will chant nightly from about 7:00-8:00 PM for one, three, or nine days. Close friends or family members may bring a wreath or give the family some money in an envelope.